The Indian Stage

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OUR LOOKOUT.

INDIAN DRAMAS IN ENGLISH.

The question of the possibility of creating a body of dramatic literature in the English language, delineating Indian life and civilisation, was suggested to us by a recent performance of *Chandrahasa* in English, which we had the privilege of witnessing. The story itself is of very great antiquity and it has even been borrowed by several countries in the West —we might instance the English rendering of the story by William Morris in his *Earthly Paradise* under the title of *The Man Born To Be King*. The Indian gentleman responsible for the composition under notice, has discharged the task with commendable ability, showing not merely a talent for dramatic presentation but a successful mastery of the language.

The language has often lapsed into the grotesque extravaganza so common in all Oriental literature, but one is disposed to pardon it in a Romance. The supernatural element plays an unduly large part in the play—even dead men are brought back to life—but who will deny that to the Hindu mind it is no serious weakness even in the twentieth century? Some dramatic situations have not been taken advantage of but it is more an individual failing than any inevitable evil associated with compositions of that type.

The idea of translating the masterpieces of Sanskrit dramatic literature into English will probably suggest itself to the reader on being asked to consider this subject. But a little reflection must convince him of the impossibility of producing any striking effects by means of a translation. When the Italian proverb brands all translators as *traitors*, by saying 'Traduttori, traditori' it expresses a literary principle of invaluable truth, though with some severity. We are familiar with some of the finest efforts at the translation of Sanskrit into English, the work of scholars like Monier Williams, Sir William Jones and Dr. Wilson, but we should have no hesitation in repeating the wholesome advice of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, if a similar plan were unfolded before us,—'Never translate, never translate.'

The composition of original Indian plays is the only other alternative, but here again we must sound a note of warning against the common mistake of embarking on such an ambitious task without acquiring even a fairly creditable mastery over the alien language. We had to examine in another connection, a few recent attempts in that direction, and we confess frankly, their lamentable lapses into bad and incorrect English offered grave provocation. It was amusing to see a writer professing to write 'original' plays

in English, in a style which betrayed an absolute failure in using the language.

It is true that no success has till now been achieved in the production of Indian plays in English but no case has been made out at all, for declaring that there is any inherent impossibility in the work. With dramatic genius and ability in wielding the alien medium of expression—we do not think the latter is impossible of acquirement for Indians—there should arise productions of this kind, interpreting the Indian spirit. Social dramas relating to modern Indian life might easily allow themselves to be treated in English. There is nothing very inconsistent between the English language, and the ideas of the world in which the educated Indian of the present day moves and has his being. Excepting in elements like vivid, native humour and power of epigram, the efforts must be crowned with success if only the literary abilities deserved it.

It is hoped that the importance of dramatic activity in this line will be patent, when a little thought is bestowed on what the fruition of such an ideal would mean in bringing together the two great races that have been brought to live side by side in India. The Indian drama in English will serve as a common meeting-ground for the Englishman and the Indian in this country and who can prognosticate the mighty consequences of such an intellectual union in drawing out all that is best in the East and the West ?

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SUGUNA VILASA SABHA.

We have before us the annual report of the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* for the year 1910 and it gives us great pleasure to see that it is a record of unusual progress. The location of the Sabha in the spacious premises of the entire downfloor of the Victoria Public Hall, has made it one of the most attractive social clubs in the city, but it is necessary to note that its usefulness as a dramatic society has also found a corresponding improvement. Among the noteworthy features of the year's progress is the organisation of a series of lectures on subjects relating to the drama. A glance at the list of subjects must serve to exhibit their variety and interest, as well as their direct usefulness to the work of the Sabha. *The Villain as Iago*, *The Acting of the Tragic*, *Poetic justice in the Drama* and the *Social Plays of Ibsen* formed the themes of treatment and discussion. We are glad to hear that the institution of lectures is to continue this year also. With the large number of additions to the strength of the Sabha, which took place during last year, it is bound to march with more rapid steps in its career of progress and we wish it all prosperity.

A SMART STAGE SAYING.

"I went a railway journey the other day and took a grand box of cigars with me."

"Well, I suppose you had a good smoke ?"

"Aye, I had that. But when the train had started I found I'd no matches."

"No matches, and yet you'd a good smoke. How did you manage for a light ?"

"Well, you see, I opened the box, took out one, and that made the box 'a cigar lighter.'"

First Comedian : "I hear they are making boots and shoes of banana skins"

Second Comedian : "I should not think they made boots and shoes ; but they make fine 'slippers.'"

THE CASE OF TOLSTOY AGAINST SHAKESPEARE—II.

BY MR. V. V. SRINIVASAN, B.A., B.L.

To begin with, objection is taken by Tolstoy to the introduction of King Lear. He seems to consider that the sole object of all the thirty lines or so before the trumpet sounds and the King enters is to communicate to the public in a humourous form the fact thatGloucester has a legitimate and an illegitimate son. This sort of criticism may be taken as a fair sample of Tolstoy's method. It is clear that Tolstoy lets himself be prejudiced by the somewhat coarse speech of Gloucester but about that I shall speak a little later. As regards this introduction it seems to me that it was intended to serve much different purposes from that stated by Tolstoy. In some at least of his dramas there can be no doubt that Shakespeare has almost in the very first words of the play succeeded in giving a clear indication of the essence of the drama. In all works of art, the first suggestion, the preparation of the mind of the reader or the spectator, is an essential element, in producing the kind and degree of appreciation. It may be called the facial expression of the work of art and the first impression produced by it will we may be sure enter into and characterize our appreciation of the rest of the work. Now then taking the first words of the play, what do these simple words "I thought the King &c., signify. The words "I thought"... standing by themselves would indicate a mistake or miscalculation made by the speaker. The use of the past tense of the verb shows that the mistake or miscalculation has been discovered. Would it then be inaccurate, to describe the play of KingLear as a tragedy of miscalculation almost from the beginning to the end. The king loves his last daughter Cordelia most and had accordingly in the division of the Kingdom made by him in council allotted a more opulent share to her but when irritated by the flattery indulged in by her elder sisters and unable to give expression her love Cordelia refuses to fall in with the mood of Lear he finds he has made a mistake and in a fit of imperious irritation disinherits her and sends her out a begg r. The very idea to discover the degree of love the daughters bear him by calling upon them to proclaim it publicly is a grotesque mistake. He again miscalculates when he expects his first two daughters would support him and also when he believes he can cow down his daughters by his infurious temper. To the end he continues to make such mistakes as when he thinks that Cordelia would be more ready and willing to poison him than love him and save him. In the play it is not merely the King that makes these miscalculations. Goneril and Regan do so and find it to their cost. Even in the under-plot relating to Gloucester, Edmund, and Edgar such mistakes and miscalculations repeat themselves. Can it then be said that these opening words are not consciously intended by the poet to be particularly suggestive. Any ordinary dramatist would no doubt have begun the play with where Lear enters and so satisfied Tolstoy, but though the lines are only about thirty in number, the introduction is intended to and does serve several other purposes as we shall presently see. It is possible to illustrate the significance of the opening words from other plays of Shakespeare and also from the writings of other great poets but space and time do not permit to enlarge on this theme. One other

purpose and that an important one, served by this introduction is to satisfy the audience that the actual division of the kingdom had already been effected and that even maps had been made defining the boundaries before Lear comes upon the scene and that in what follows, Lear merely means to publish as he himself says, his daughters' dowers. Tolstoy says it is unnatural that a king however old and stupid could believe the words of his vicious daughters with whom he had passed his whole life and not believe his favourite daughter. There was no question in the scene of any believing. It was only the occasion of a public announcement. Cordelia is disinherited not because Lear disbelieves any of her statements or even thinks she does not really love him but only because the old autocrat who is by nature imperious and who probably did not know what it was to be contradicted or insulted feels highly offended and irritated by the contrariety of Cordelia and for her thwarting him, her loving father and king, in such a manner and in public. It almost seems to me that Shakespeare must have foreseen, that but for such an introduction it would be possible for readers and spectators to fall into the error of supposing that Lear is made to divide his kingdom on the stage on a mere whim and without any previous deliberation or consultation with his councillors.

But in spite of this obvious precaution on the part of Shakespeare, Tolstoy is unable to keep himself from error. A further object would also be seen to be aimed at in this introduction. Tolstoy takes exception to the coarseness of Gloucester's language. The language is no doubt coarse but it seems to me that from the manner in which the topic is introduced, it may almost be said abruptly and soon cut short, it is clear that it must have been out of deliberate purpose it is introduced. The poet has to justify and explain throughout the play, pieces of conduct of the most abnormal character such as a daughter treating her old father cruelly, base ingratitude in return for the gift of power and wealth, a father suspecting his son and *vice versa*, a brother deceiving and ruining a brother, a married woman falling in love with a stranger, a wife plotting to kill her husband in cold blood and so on. Such things can ordinarily happen only in a coarse and abnormal age and lowness in this age is bound to affect all ordinary men both in character and manners. It was an age of coarse and abnormal domestic relations. The sight therefore of a father speaking in the hearing of a son sportingly, in the presence of a stranger lightly, of his power, adulteries and of the illegitimacy of the boy serves to show us the age as if in a flash and prepares us for what is to follow. The time and conditions under which the main plot of the Lear episode and the underplot of the Edmond episode happen are here portrayed to us. It seems therefore impossible to agree with Tolstoy in condemning the introduction as purposeless. Tolstoy seems to think that it is extremely unnatural and opposed to human nature that however old and stupid the king may be he should be represented as cutting off for ever without the proverbial penny a daughter whom he so much loved on such trifling excuse. All that we can say is that given the character of Lear and that understood, the rest would seem to follow quite logically and naturally enough. I have myself more than once witnessed the spectacle of an undisciplined father distributing sweets

to all children in the house, excepting one, a dearly loved one perchance, merely out of spitė, offended vanity, because the child in a childish freak refused to carry out some command probably as irrational and silly as that of Lear. This was when the father had sweets to give away and I fail to see how or why it should be otherwise when what has to be given away is a kingdom.

Tolstoy remarks again that the relations between Gloucester and his two sons and the feelings of these characters are as unnatural as Lears' relations to his daughters or even more so. It is difficult to understand what exactly Tolstoy means by 'unnatural.' If he means to suggest that the conduct represented in the play of these people does not flow from their character as conceived by Shakespeare all that I can say is Tolstoy has not proved it. If he means on the other hand that there are no such characters in the world we cannot agree with him. If however he means by unnatural, opposed to natural goodness, or in other words vicious, we have no quarrel with him nor can we then see what quarrel he can have with Shakespeare.

One constant circumstance which Tolstoy never seems tired of mentioning is what he considers the incredible fact that Lear should not have been able to see through the disguise of Kent. Shakespeare has nowhere told us that his Lear was a very shrewd man but we know that his Lear was in his dotage and the mental imbecility must have been already there that rendered the step to madness so easy. Is it then a matter for surprise that Lear should not have been able to see through the disguise. To a large extent perhaps it depends upon the manner and degree of disguise. For my part I cannot consent to treat this aspect of the story as in any measure improbable. I happen myself to have travelled in disguise sitting next to a friend of mine in the same Railway compartment and conversing with him for perhaps a couple of hours, quite as a stranger and without his suspecting in the least my identity. We must further remember that this was only for a few days and that soon after this Lear becomes mad. All such criticism more or less based on the limited experience of individuals is unsound and unsubstantial.

The next point referred to by Tolstoy is the character and function of the Fool. He seems to think that some speeches of Kent and all those of the Fool are unsuited to the position of relation between the parties He says that the jokes are not witty and are mirthless and humourless and that such conversations cause wearisome uneasiness in the spectator or reader. Granting for the sake of argument that they are so, what warrant is there for thinking that every character that is represented as making jokes should be made witty. How many people do we not find in every society who are ambitious to be witty and whose eternal joking consists only in repeating the same fun, reproducing the same idea in different stilted forms or indulging merely in vulgar conceits or play upon words and when they find they are not appreciated do all the laughing themselves. But here also as in the other instance the error of Tolstoy counts in overlooking the character portrayed. It is possible to take speech after speech of the Fool and directly trace it to the conception of character true to him but such a course is beyond my present purpose. In his remarks relating to the respective social

position of these characters I am afraid that Tolstoy has forgotten that after Lear's abdication and in his adversity the gulf between him and Kent and the Fool has been considerably narrowed. The time-honoured privileges of the court-fool should not also be lost sight of. And again in seeking to criticise the language in which Lear speaks, as pompous, high-flown, characterless and so on (Tolstoy seems to ignore the fact that Lear is purposely depicted as one with a will) imperious, impatient of opposition, or contradiction and that that is his character. Another point entirely failed to be appreciated by Tolstoy is the bearing that the conversation between the Fool and Kent has on the tragic pathos and every topic of conversation is by his two faithful adherents viewed only from the point of view of the folly of Lear which is the one thing even in their minds. Tolstoy goes on in this style narrating the story and contenting himself with the exclamation how absurd and how unnatural all that is. He criticism as to Edgar making Gloucester believe that he is taking him to a cliff while still on legal ground and fall on the ground as into an abyss supercilious. As Gloucester was blind, there was no difficulty in leading him up a cliff and making him fall on level ground there and it cannot easily be believed that Shakespeare has committed such an obvious mistake. The point of the deception consists in bringing home to the audience the extreme inbecility of Gloucester. It will be difficult to say what an old man at his age with his eyes plucked out and attacked adversely cannot be made to believe. The criticism of Tolstoy will be in point if Gloucester was represented as a man of capacity or as one in possession of all his faculties unimpaired. This is however not so. The objection to the scene of the meeting between Lear and Cordelia we are told is that there are some scenes before and some after. If according to Tolstoy that scene should have been the last it would be difficult to appreciate the termination of the story. It seems to me that Tolstoy has overlooked some of the essential characteristics of a tragic denouement.

(To be continued.)

AUGUSTINE BIRREL ON ACTORS—I.

By Mr. P. Parthasarathi Iyengar, B.A., B.L.

The profession of the actor is the subject of one of the Essays of the Right Hon. Augustine Birrel, M. P., in the " Obiter Dicta." The actor fares very badly in the hands of Mr. Birrel for to him the profession is *itself* derogatory. " That the world ancient and modern has despised the actor's profession cannot be denied.', " The very act of acting *i.e.*, the art of mimicry, or the representation of feigned emotions called up by sham situations, is in itself an occupation, an educated man should be slow to adopt as the profession of a life " Therefore, the great British dramatists headed by Shakespeare, and writers like Ibsen to take only a few instances have been the bespoilers of the prospects and the intellect of millions of men and women.

But it is difficult to agree with Mr. Birrel's estimate of the actor's profession or with his wholesale condemnation of the same. The glory of dramatic art is to personate passion and the tunes of passion, observes Charles Lamb in his admirable essays and the art is one in

which certain peculiar talents are necessary. The actor inhibits his own personality. It is not mere mimicry or mere feigning of emotions. But there is a good deal of pathos or feeling imposed into it for the moment by the actor's identifying himself with the particular character entrusted to him. This implies a good deal of mental control and to look real when he is not is a feat that one could perform only after a good deal of discipline. To personate a character again is to *act* that character, to convey to the audience the thoughts and the surging emotions of that character. To indicate the anxiety or the fear or the expectant attitude of sorrow, or love or whatever it is, requires an attentive study of human nature, and a natural readiness to utilise that knowledge on the stage. It is generally forgotten that the actor conveys to the audience a vast quantity of thought and feeling which they otherwise would never learn by themselves and for this reason the actor does inestimable service. That is also the reason why vast sums are spent upon attending dramas especially when it is announced that a well-known actor appears. Therefore there is nothing demeaning in the profession itself unless the actor demeans himself otherwise.

Another point of attack that Mr. Birrel flings upon the actor is that he is incapable of sound judgment or taste. To act is one thing and to be a critic is another. The actor is not a critic. His talents are of a different order from that of picking holes in other's work. He does not profess to pronounce his opinions on the merits or otherwise of other's work. In fact criticism is uncongenial on the stage. While on the stage if he forgets his own personality, he forgets he could also criticise. But given education enough the actor's calling makes him a sound critic. The actor amuses the audience but it is not mere amusement that attracts them as Mr. Birrel makes it out to be. Even to afford amusement requires no mean capacity. The actor as is said carries a fund of thought and feeling which no amount of reading can impart. The stage affords the spectacle of another world, may be artificial, another world peopled by the same passions and cunning and fate pain and pleasure, delight and disappointment, wisdom and folly, pride and fall. True there is a good deal of hilarity boisterous excitement, but behind these outward currents, there is a quiet stream of education flowing over the mind and heart, a stream fertilising the emotions and enriching the thought. Mr. Birrel in another place remembers Dr. Johnson's famous remark about the actor David Garrick when he heard of his death—"I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." Does not a celebrated actor deserve a monument, a place in the memory of posterity? It cannot be denied that in spite of Mr. Birrel's onslaughts and those of the men of his like, the actor's profession has risen in status and public estimation and the actor is now the subject of a good deal of interview and notice. Their private life and ancestry are ransacked and every one of their movements is sedulously watched and published in Journals and Magazines. There is something charming in the private lives of actors as they show a strange variety from that in which they are usually seen on the stage. Skipping over a thrilling account of her life in Modjeska's Memoirs in the Century

Magazine (America), we wonder how Modjeska as *Mary Stuart* or *Camila* could also be a loving and tender wife.

In the east there is a good deal of prejudice against the actor's profession though there is a vast amount of dramatic literature. It would indicate that a vast majority of them were not intended for having staged but were intended only to be read. There was however a class known as the *actor's class* to suit whom dramas in very simple colloquial language were written and such plays were attended by large classes of the country folk.

(*To be continued.*)

SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF EVIL.

BY MR. K. CHINNASAWMI IYER, B.A.

A survey of human affairs at any part of the history of the world reveals to us the curious admixture of good and evil, the combat between the two and the final victory of the one or the other usually the latter to all seeming. From the time evil crept into Paradise and tainted the glorious work of God, every one has been saddened by the spectacle of a little evil entering almost every work of good and spreading. It has been the case all over of the little rift within the lute which slowly widening silenced all music. Philosophers and poets have looked at this problem of evil from different standpoints and have offered various solutions. Though few of them are convincing, still a study of the treatment of the great and important problem as obtaining in the works of the myriad-minded poet will not be without profit. Shakespeare saw life steadily and saw it whole. His variety and depth of the treatment of the problem of evil is largely due to the wide perspective before him.

In dealing with it Shakespeare has not been weighed down by its magnitude. When he began to write dramas, England had entered into a new era of unexampled prosperity and glory. The invincible Spanish Armada had just then been conquered. Intrepid sailors were adding to the reputation of their country by sailing in unknown seas, colonising new lands and by undertaking buccaneering expeditions. Universal joy and satisfaction reigned in England. In such a halcyon time did Shakespeare write his dramas and in them as a natural consequence is reflected the spirit of the age buoyant and hopeful. Moreover, when England went in self-defence to meet the great Armada of a powerful sovereign everyone had misgivings of success and when it actually came to them Englishmen thought that without the intervention of Heaven the miracle, for it was nothing short of that, could not have happened. This general belief went to stay the minds of the people and to it is also due Shakespeare's trust in the well-ordering of a Divine Providence when the mass of evil was pressing him. Not without precedent did it happen. After the great national victories of Marathon and Salamis, Sophocles gave to an astonishing world a series of dramatic creations brimful of Optimism and Confidence in all the dealings of Providence.

Shakespeare began first by being on the border of pessimism. A study of Titus Audronicus one of the plays in the early group reveals the fact well enough. It is nothing short of a melodrama, dangers leap forth like lightning and blood flows like water, The atrocities of

Tamora and her dark paramour Aaron are beyond conception and from this dark mass of sin and evil not a ray of light or hope gleams forth. In the treatment of evil here evidently Shakespeare was following in the wake of Marlowe who in his 'Jew of Malta' has heaped murder on murder without any moral compunction. No great moral issues seem to be involved and the whole play is subject to every wind of doctrine. In none of his plots is destiny represented as an agent antecedent to the action comprised in the play itself. Excepting Hamlet the fate of the protagonists and the chief persons who are also involved with them in ruin requires no supernatural intervention as every one of them meets the just and which cannot be considered anything more than a fit penalty for the violation of the moral law.

Shakespeare is so very just in the treatment of the problen of evil that he does not make his characters writhe and wriggle in the grip of fate ; while they all show in clear and unmistakable lines of conduct that

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

The moral law requires obedience from all on they who set it at naught by surrendering themselves to the blandishments of evil suffer and pay grievously for their lapses. Intemperance and utter recklessness ruins Timon, rashness brings Romeo and Juliet to an untimely end, pride swollen to insolence destroys Coriolanus, Lear falls through indiscretion Antony by unbridled sensuality, Hotspur by ill-weaved ambition and Macbeth by extravagant desire.

Men and women drain the cup of misery to its dregs but they never blaspheme themselves by any outbursts against Heaven and its immutable decrees. Nor is the Power above praised by any for His righteous dealing. There is neither blame nor praise. The tacit submission so events in the light of a clear understanding shown in the relation between cause and effect is a remarkable feature in most of the plots of Shakespeare. Hamlet falls on the stage with those expressive words "The rest is silence." As Gervinus observes, Shakespeare starts from the point that man is born with powers of self-regulation and self-determination which are to direct aright his action, the "Whence we are," and the "Whither are you going" are knotty problems which lie beyond his province and for which he has no solution. With man in action, with God manifesting himself in law, his philosophy of life begins and ends and beyond all reigns awful silence.

Richard III is one of the most wicked of Shakespeare's characters. As he moves in his downward path of moral depravity he grows more callous and wholly remorseless. The scrivener in the play coming to know of the murderous designs of the hunch-backed king exclaims.

But is the world, and all will come to naught.
When such ill-deeling must be seen in thought.

There is nothing very strange in a guilty man becoming more guilty by adding one crime to another. Richard himself says.

But I am in.
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin :
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

This is quite in keeping with real life and no supernatural element appears in the development of evil. With the success of Richmond at Bosworth, Shakespeare looks up to enrich the time to come with 'smooth-faced peace, Evil if allowed

to have its way will reduce the world to ashes and when a poet like Swinburne sings of evil and draws out its baneful working in its lengthening chains by music. One finds himself in hopeless bewilderment in this sinful world his mind grows utterly pessimistic and he wails with Destiny which ' with men for Pieces plays'.

> Hither and thither moves and mates and slays
> And one by one back in the closet lays.

In the Measure he deals with the moral problem in a distinctly clear manner. What did Shakespeare think of it at all ? As Raleigh says he condemns us one high or low Clandis is not wicked. He is merly human. He shocks our moral feelings only by the state of his mind from an excessive dread of the great void beyond the grave. Angelo is after all only a hypocrite who deceives himself that he can rise above the level. He does not stand before us as a specimen of depraved wickedness. Temptation grows too strong when Isabella passes by and his old ideals leave him. He is thrown off the line by a sudden gust of passion as many others have been. In this play Shakespeare blames no one for in his statement of the problem of Evil he is thoroughly optimistic and helps, not dismays in our work in the world.

The poet calmly essays to handle a theme concerning the ways of men in the most stupendous of his creations, 'King Lear' which is a tale of savage and immaterial wrong deliberately planned and ruthlessly perpetrated. The horrid cruelties of the unnatural daughters, Goneril and Regan, the barbarous designs of Edmund, the bastard son of Gloucester are more amply compensated by the sweetness and filial piety of Cordelia. From the blackness of Hell filled with the Tartarean smoke of sulphur there gleams forth love ardent, unconquerable and unquenchable. Only the eloquent words of Dowden can do justice to the great merit of this play. In it he says that Shakespeare opposes the presence and influences of Evil, not by any transcendental denial of evil, but by the presence of human virtue, fidelity ad self-sacrificial love. In no play is there a clearer and intenser manifestation of loyal manhood and of strong, tender womanhood. Lear himself is responsible for his insanity and his intemperance added to an act of immorality on the part of Gloucester is the cause of all the Evil. When Shakespeare recognises a Universal Law divinely appointed, immutable and ubiquitous he has given in it a prominent place to love. The disturbance of this moral equilibrium in the ill-regulated passions or the ill-regulated mind, in the ill-governed home or the ill-ordered palace is the evil which he treats of.

In Othello, the working of evil is different. The suspension of the law that strength cannot be subordinated to weakness produces the anarchy. Othello in his weakness prefers to be worked upon by Iago. Iago has been enthroned as a kind of evil God. With great pride in himself, he delights to wield irresponsible power. It is difficult to say to what particular conclusion the treatment of evil in the play tends but it may be said that it points to the fact that they who are possessed of greatness have to pay for it. Desdemona and Othello pass out of our view as perfect beings. Murder looks like sacrifice.

Macbeth is conscious all the while of having broken the law addressing himself to the most ambitious projects which end

in leading his soul to ruin. When he says

> My way of life.
> Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf

he speaks like Shakespeare. Nowhere does he rail at Fate and Providence just to shift the responsibility from himself. The Macbeth of the first Act, the thane trusted by his sovereign proud of his achievements in war and the man esteemed by all stands in glaring contrast with his later, self-tainted by evil and torn by passions.

If the historical plays we have illustrations of the mischief and misery which issue both to individuals and states when the equilibrium of balanced power is disturbed. The harmony of the ordered state is then another law which Shakespeare insists upon.

> Government, though high and low and lower,
> Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,
> Congreeing in a full and natural close,
> Like music.

Shakespeare as has been noticed above was on the verge of pessimism when he began his work for the stage. After his great tragidies where the forces of good and evil are in terrible combat, Shakespeare looks 'at the stars' in his closing dramas. His closing work is unmistakably optimistic 'some falls are meant the happier to arise.' In this line is the key to the afflictions of Imogen and Posthumus. In brilliant optimism in the treatment of Evil, Shakespeare is only approached by Browning. Pippa's song alone is enough to show how great his confidence in Providence in the midst of evil was.

Shakespeare's philosophy of life has been well expressed by the Shepherd Corin in 'As you Like It.' "The property of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun." A firm believer in the well-ordering of all things in the Universe, Shakespeare considers that man though surrounded by evil and hardpressed by it may still rise above it and shed light and influence all around. But at certain times it may seem that the impulse and passions that shape man's life to happy or unhappy ends owe their power to something greater than man and refuse his control. In such cases they get an independent life and are embodied in supernatural beings. The witches and ghosts in Macbeth may lead one to this view but after all they merely shadow and reflect the evil mind and a psychological point of view there is nothing grotesque in it. Evil is in the world only to enable man to be chastened by its influence and shine all the brighter. Man's monitor is the Law and man's duty of duties is submission. In the treatment of the moral problem Shakespeare gives us a chance to watch the events of real life. "From our hidden vantage-ground we see into the mystery of things, as if we were God's spies." Shakespeare has given us strength by the way in which he has looked at Evil. A thing at which many shudder and in which few find any use at all has been judged from a different standpoint leaving behind a work greater than a philosopher's who only thinks of Utopias where no evil creeps to corrupt good. In the words of Lewis Morris,

> Evil is life,
> The conflict of great laws pervading space;
> Evil is strife,
> Which keeps the creature in its ordered place.

GENIUS AND TALENT.

> "Talk not of Genius failed,
> Genius is master of man,
> Genius must do what it must,
> Talent must do—what it can."

OUR CRITIC.

Chapala or *East Lynne* in Tamil, by Mr. A. Krishnasamiah. *The Sugana Vilasa Sabha*, Wednesday, the 12th April, 1911.

The idea of dramatising a novel is refreshing indeed, but there is the danger of missing some of the essentials of dramatic presentation in such a rendering. We are not quite sure if Mr. A. Krishnasamiah's adaptation of *East Lynne* does not show such a weakness at least at the beginning, though the play serves to popularise among the Tamil-reading public, one of the most widely read of modern English novels.

The *Sugana Vilasa Sabha* gave a very successful performance of *Chapala* on the 12th of the last month. The author acquitted himself admirably in the part of the heroine with music of a very high quality. He presented the varied fortunes of that unfortunate woman, with extraordinary sweetness and sympathy. Mr. T. Srinivasaraghavan as Mr. Carlyle was good too, though we have to point out that he showed an undue anxiety to present his songs with all the slow elaboration of a concert hall. The Villain of the play was Mr. Jayaram and he was the perfect dandy, he was intended to be. The courtship and the elopement were managed with sufficient attractiveness. We must however comment on the somewhat monotonous measure of steps into which he often fell. There were moments when we could almost forecast the exact nature and direction of the next step. Mr. Carlyle's calculating sister was Mr. Ramakrishniah and the character suited him admirably. Mr. Vadivelu produced a striking effect as the gay and frivolous Afy Hallijohn and Mr. P. Sambandam was grand and dignified as the representative of the old class of Indian landed aristocrats.

We would only ask once more for a recasting of the earlier part, with a view to make the scenes more *dramatic.*

ECHOES FROM THE PAST.

BHÂVAPRÂKÂSAH

BY

Mr. T. S. NARAYANA SASTRIAR, B.A., B.L.,

Amarasimha, the author of Nâmalingânuśâsana calls it as Punya-bhûmi or the Sacred Land between the Vindhya and the Himâlaya mountains. It is now generally known as 'Hindûsthân :

Mêrûttara (Mêru + Uttara) literally means a country which is even superior to Mêru, the home of the Dêvas or the Original Âryas. It is the special name of a very ancient province and city situated about half-way between the Ganges and the Jamna ; and it now forms an important district in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, under the modern name of Meerut. The city of Merûttara or Meerut as it is now known is at least as old as the days of Aśôka who erected one of his *stupas* (pillars) here. In 1805 it is mentioned as 'a ruined depopulated town,' but since the Mutiny of 1857, it has increased in population and importance owing to its selection by the British Government as the site of a great military station.

Mâṭharapûjya (Mâṭhara + pujya) literally means a village held in great reverence by Mâṭharyas or the Brâhmaṇas who trace their descent from Mâṭhara or the famous sage Vyâsa. It

is evidently the name of an Agrahâra in the district of Meerut, and the Mâṭhapûji Brâhmaṇas of Southern India who all bear the same Gôtra as our author still look to that Agrahâra in Meerut as their original home. It is very likely that 'Mâṭhapûji' is a modern corruption of that ancient name 'Mâṭharapûjya.

तत्र लक्ष्मणनाम्मासी द्विप्रः काश्यपवंशजः ॥३॥
त्रिंशता क्रतुभि र्विष्णुं तोषयामास वेदवित् ।
वेदानां भाष्यमकरो न्नाम्नायो वेदभूषणम् ॥७॥

Taro Lakshmanâ-nâmâ 'sîd
viprah Kas'yapa-vams'ajah ;
Trims'ata Kratubhir Vishnum
toshayamasa vedavit : Vedanam
bhashyam akaron namna yo
Veda-bhushanam.

In that village there lived a learned Brâhmaṇa born of the family of Kâs'yapa by name Lakshmaṇa. He was well versed in all the Vedas and propitiated the All-pervading God, Vishnu, by performing thirty Yajnâs or sacrifices to His honour. He also wrote a commentary on the Vedas under the title of 'Veda-Bhûṣhaṇa.'

6-7. In these three couplets the author gives a brief account of his own great-grandfather, Lakshmaṇa Paṇḍita or Lakshmana Yajvan. He is generally believed to be a contemporary of King Bhoja of Dhârâ and is said to have completed tne Râmâyaṇa Champû which was left unfinished by King Bhoja, by writing the sixth or the Yuddhakâṇḍa. He is there described as the son of Gangâdhara and Gangâmbikâ, and as a resident of Sanagara, evidently a town in the kingdom of Dhârâ. Bilhaṇa in his Vikramânkadevacharita, XVIII--95, refers to this Gangâdhara as a poet who flourished at the Court of Karṇadeva of Chedi, who was a contemporary of king Bhoja of Dhâra, Paramâra of Mâlava, son and successor of Sindhularâja. Lakshmana Paṇḍita is here described as having written a commentary on the Vedas under the name of Veda-Bhûshaṇa (Ornament of the Vedas), but we have not been able to trace the existence of any such work as yet. It is quite possible that such a work might have been written during Bhoja's reign by Lakshmana Pandita who completed his Râmâyana Champû, as we know for certain that Uvaṭa, the son of Vajraṭa, a native of Ânandapura, a city in Mâlava, wrote his Bhâshya on his Vâjasaneya Samhita at Avanti during Bhoja's reign and at his request. We have, however, found out a work called Vaidikâbharana on Veda-Lakshana ascribed to one Lakshmaṇa Yajvan of Kâśyapa Gotra, who may perhaps be the same Lakshmana Pandita as is described here. In this latter work, a manuscript copy of which we have been able to procure from one of the Mâṭhapûji (மாடபூசி) Brâhmaṇas of Southern India, he is also described as having written a gloss on Jayadeva's Gîta-Govinda under the name of Stuti-Ranjanî.

तस्य श्रीकृष्ण नामासीत् पुत्रः कृष्णवरद्दाः
प्रबोधेन्दूदयारव्यं यो रचयामास नाटकम् ॥८॥
वेदानधीत्यसकलान् शास्त्राण्यप्यखिलानिच ।
पुत्रार्थं स महादेवं वाराणस्या मतोषयत् ॥ ९ ॥

Tasya S'rî-Kṛishṇa-nâmâ, sît
patrah Kṛishna iva, parah ;
Prabodhendudaya Khyam yôrachay-
amasa naṭakam,
Vedan adhîtya sakalân śastrany'apy'a
Khilancha ;
Putrâ'rtham sa Mahâdevam Vârâ-
ṇasyâm atoshayat.

He (Lakshmana Pandita) had a son named Krishnamiśra, who was as it were another Srî Krishna Himself. He wrote an excellent drama (Nataka) known as Prabodha-Chandrodaya. He Studied all the Vedas and all the Sâstras and propitiated the Great God, Mahadeva at Vârânasi for the sake of getting a son.

8-9. In these two stanzas we have a short account of our author's grandfather, Srî Krishnamiśra, the famous author of Prabodha-Chandrodaya or 'Rise of the Moon of Knowledge,' a play in six acts. 'It is one of the most remarkable products of Indian literature' and is certainly the greatest of the philosophical dramas that the world has ever seen. We know from this work and from inscriptions of several copper-plates that Krishnamiśra was the chief preceptor of Kîrttivarman II, the first Kadamba ruler of whom anything historical is known. The defeat of Karṇa or Karṇadeva, Kalachuri of Chedi or Dâhâla, son and successor of Gângeyadeva by Gopâla, General of Kîrtivarman II is recorded both in inscriptions and in Krishnamiśra's Prabodha-Chandrodaya. This Karna is mentioned in various inscriptions and Bilhana's Vikramânkadevacharita as having subdued the Pâṇḍyas, Muralas, Ḳungas, Vangas, Kîras and-Hûṇas, and as having once forced even King Bhoja to flee. It was Udayâditya of Mâlava the son and successor of Bhoja, who came to the throne of Mâlava in 1070 A. D. that finally delivered the earth which was troubled by kings and taken possession of by Karna, with the assistance of Someśvara I, the Western Châlukya king, who founded Kalyâna as the capital of his kingdom, and whose second son it was that became the famous Vikramâditya of Kalyân the hero of Bilhana's Vikramankadeva charita. Vârâṇasi or the holy city of Benares is the name of Kâśî situated on the northern bank of Ganges. It is named after the two rivers Vâranâ and Asi between which it is situated. The shrine of Visveśvara dedicated to Mahâdeva is the most important of the numerous temples at Benares, and is considered by the Hindus the holiest of all the holy places in the sacred city.

तस्यासीद्भट्टगोपालो नाम्ना सूनुः सुलोचनः ।
अष्टादशसु विद्यासु बहुशः स कृतश्रमः ॥ १० ॥

Tasya, sîd Bhaṭṭa-Gopalanamna sûnus
sulochanaha ;
Ashtadaśasu Vidyasu bahuśas sa Kṛit-
aśramah.

He (Krishnamisra) had a son by name Bhaṭṭa Gopâla of beautiful eyes. He had taken great pains in mastering all the eighteen Vidyâs.

10. In this stanza, the author describes his own father Bhaṭṭa Gopâla. The

expression Sulochana, (Beautiful-eyed) indicate that he must have been an extremely charming and attractive person in his time. The second half of the stanza shows that he was a master of the whole field of Sanskrit literature, for the eighteen Vidyâs include all the four Vedas, the four Upavedas, the six Vedâṅgas, the Purânas, the Dharma Sâstras, the Nyâyas and the Mîmâmsâs.

The Ashṭâdasa-Vidyâs are thus described in the Vishnu Purâṇa :

"अंगानि, वेदाश्चत्वारो, मीमांसा, न्यायविस्तरः।
धर्मशास्त्रं, पुराणंच, विद्याह्येता श्चतुर्दश ॥
आयुर्वेदो, धनुर्वेदो, गान्धर्वश्चेति ते त्रयः।
अर्थवेदश्चतुर्थश्च विद्याह्यष्टादशैवताः ॥"

"Aṅgani, Vedaś chatvaro,
Mîmamsa, Nyaya-vistarah ;
Dharma-śastram, Puranam cha
Vidyahy' etaś chaturdaśa:
Âyur-vedo, Dhanur-vedo
Gandharvaś che'ti te trayah,
Artha-vedaś chaturthaś cha
Vidyahy 'ashṭadaśaiva tah."

We know from ' Sâhitya-Chûḍâmaṇ a beautiful work on Alankâra-śâstra ascribed to Bhaṭṭa Gopala that he was a contemporary of Yasovarman, Paramara of Mâlava, and Somesvara III Western Châlukya of Kalyâna, who flourished about the first half of the 12th century A. D.

उपास्य शारदां देवीं पुत्रं लेभे गुणोत्तरम् ।
तमाह्वयत् पिता प्रीतः शारदातनयाख्यया ॥ ११ ॥

Upasya Saradam devîmputram lebhe gunottaram ;
Tam ahvayat pita prîtas' S'aradatanayâ, khyaya.

Having propitiated Sâradâ, the Goddess of Learning, he (Bhatta Gopâla) obtained a son of excellent qualities. The father, pleased by the special favour shown to him by the Goddess of Learning called his son Sâradâtanaya after her name.

11. In this stanza, the author of this work gives an account of himself and the reason why he came to be called by the name of Sâradâtanaya from his infancy—the apellation Saradâ-tanaya ' which means, the son of Saraswathi.

OUR BOUQUET

THE USE OF POETRY.

A correspondent sends us the following extract from *Chatterton* by JONES and HERMAN.

Chatterton :—What's the use of poetry ? Why, to live upon. When one can't get bread and cheese ; to clothe and warm oneself with, when one is ragged and cold ! What is the use of Poetry ? To keep faith and hope and worship alive in the heart of man, to reconcile him to life, to make him at home in his world. What's the use of poetry ? To pour vitriol on deceit and vice, to seam and scar the detested face of hypocrisy and lies. To add hate to all things hateful, and shame to all things shameful ! What's use of poetry ? To give beauty to beauty, more grace to grace, more truth to truth, to deck the flowers of the field, to rain perfume on the rose and music on the nightingale. What's the use of poetry ? To be the stumbling-block to the worldly wise and the proud, and a camp and pillar of fire to children and the childlike. What's the use of poetry ? To embalm the immortal dead, to impart this crimeless universe, to snatch the secrets

of the stars, to unleash the seas and the winds, to fling a double rainbow of hope and glory across the heavens, till all the universe shouts with one voice, and heats with one heart and pants with one breath! What's the use of poetry ? To make this wide world drunk with loveliness, to make this garret a palace and me the king of Death aud Fate ! Poetry not real ! not useful ! It is you who are not real, you practical people. You heard of money-grubbers, you bats, you owls, you moles, you human vegetables, who root yourselves, and fatten up your dull, petty, miserable lives, and eat and drink and sleep, and buy and sell and soil, in one long round of humdrum death-in-life! It is you who are not real. You were dead and huddled into oblivion before you were born ; you do not live at all ; you are smoke from the nostrils of death. Poetry not real ! Not useful ! There is nothing useful but poetry, and nothing real but the poet !"

THE LIMITATIONS OF INDIAN MUSIC.

A Correspondent writes to the "Madras Mail."

There is a certain class of advocates for Indian music, who, whether from real conviction, from a certain feeling of sympathy, or from mere prejudice, apparently seek to exalt Indian music by comparison with its Western sister ; and the point which this class loves to make and to emphasise is that Indian music possesses many more notes and far more delicate gradations of tone. This is a purely fallacious argument. It may be true that the sub-divided chromatic sacle suits the genius of Indian music, as it certainly does not suit the European variety, but it by no means follows that Indian music is therefore, ahigher art, or even that it is has greater possibilities. One might as well argue that because the French language has more words than the English, French literature must necessarily be superior. It is surely admitted that while there are good and bad compositions in both languages, by writers with the same materials at command, the highest French literature does not excel the highest English literature by reason of the number of words or the delicate gradations of meaning, though opinions may differ as to the respective quality of the genius of the two languages. Similarly, in music of the most delicate gradations of tone are known as the chromatic scale, but Spohr, who is particularly fond of chromatic passages, takes rank not only below Beethoven and Mozart, but also below Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn. Neither can it be said that conplexity of orchestration leads of necessity to better results, for there are many musicians who prefer the quiet orchestration of Mozart, with its reliance on strings, to the more insistent brass of Wagner and to the mountainous complications of the new school, whose leader is Richar Strauss. Nevertheless it may fairly be argued that whatever possibilities Indian music may possess by reason of its "quarter tones," they are at the present time more than counterblanced by the far larger range of instruments, the far greater possibilities of combination, and the immense power of control of sound ranging from the merest whispering *pianissimo* to the most crashing *fortissimo*. Instances of this could easily be multiplied. The chattering audience is often unaware that the orchestra has actually begun the Prelude to *Lohengrin* or the *Pathelique Symphony* of Tchaikowsky, so low is the sound, while perhaps the best instance of

the gradation from soft to loud is the *Scherzo* of Beethoven's *C. Minor Symphony* leading up to the final march. What has the Indian apologist to put against the three great divisions of his orchestra into strings, wood, wind and brass, together with the attendant drums, cymbals and other appurtenances? Could any Indian orchestra approach even in its own fashion the magnificent sweep of the Valkyries through the air or the tender murmurings of the forest in *Siegfried*? But, it may be argued, that the genius of East and West is not the same. Indian music does not want and is not fitted to mimic the rush of horses or the movement of leaves. If any such argument be used, the retort is surely obvious. Indian music suffers by its evident limitations.

It seems to be admitted, even by its most ardent apologists, that Indian music is for the most part confined to two themes, the erotic and the religious. The hymns to Love, which very often approach—to European ears at least—perilously near the borderland of decency, may be passionate, voluptuous, delightful. They may play on the whole gamut of feeling which is awakened by the subject of love, but it can hardly be contended that they arouse the "higher emotions" by which the soul is transported into an ampler aether and a diviner air. The religious hymns stand on a differnt footing, but even granting that they achieve the perfect ideal of sublime conception wedded to immortal music, they do not embrace all the various passions, some lower, some higher, which are capable of expression in music. Setting aside purely instrumental music, from the single *veena* to the Indian orchestra on the one hand, and from the Chopin Ballads to the *Ninth Symphony* on the other—and here there can surely be no question that the Western music has an infinitely wider range—let us compare the songs alone of the two methods. And for their comparison it is not necessary to call up the battalions of religious and secular music from Palestrina to Wagner; a single composer and a single class of composition will suffice. Schubert has given us in his songs many varieties of feeling. The erotic style is well exemplified by the *Serenade*; the religious in *Litnace*, *Die Junge nonne* and *Ave Maria*; mere playful fancy it is hard to beat *The Trout*; for pathos Gretchen's long from *Faust* or Thekla's from Piccolomini; *Haiden Roslen* is typical of the simple ditty; *Der Wanderer*, beloved of Germany, appeals to love of couutry and, finally, *Der Erlkonig* is a splendid example of the grand epic style. These are a few—a very few—instances that occur at once from the portfolio of a single composer. They could be multiplied almost indefinitely if a catalogue were not wearisome. A striking instance of contrast was given at the London Opera last year when the rollicking fun of a German fairy tale—Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* appeared on the same bill with the solemn religious fervour of Debusay's *Prodigal Son*.

Indian music, then, has more to learn from Europe than mere notation. The "delicate gradations of sound," so unsuited to European music as we know it, may be better adapted to Indian genius and may appeal more strongly to Indian taste, but it still remains for India to widen the scope of her compositions, and to remember that if she cannot always appeal to the highest, there are other alternatives than an appeal to the lowest, emo-

tions of the Human race. Moreover, it to be assumed that some emotion, capable of a label, must be aroused, and this is perhaps the reason why, in comparing the two systems, the noblest form of European creation, the symphony, to which there is probably nothing analogous at all in Indian music, is too apt to be ignored. But, surely, much music (and much also both in Nature, Art and Literature appeals to man's sense of the beautiful, and to that only. Those who are not gifted with the exquisite refinement of the metaphysical temperament would find it hard to say whether the sight of Derwentwater awakened in them a feeling of love or pity, or anger or jealousy, or any of the emotions of their class, higher or lower. Milton's "Ode on the Nativity" and Swinburne's "Triumph of Time" charm quite as much by the beauty of their diction and the music of their rhythm as by the subjects of which they treat, and similarly, though the charm of Mozart's *G. Minor Symphony* and Jarnefelts *Praeludium* may be different in kind, they appeal, each in its own way, not to any moral emotion, but simply to the sense of the beautiful and to the recognition of perfect expression. "Programme" music, such as the representation of the taking of Moscow in Tchaikowsky's "1812" overture, or of the whips and snakes in Strauss's *Electra* does not by any means represent the highest class of the European art, nor can it be said that the conscious attempt to appeal to the moral emotions has often attained to the musical ideal.

To create music one must have the composer; to create good music the composer must have genius, and this, unfortunately, no school of music can guarantee. But as from Haydn arose Mozart Johu Miss Beethoven and from Beethoven Wagner, so we may be permitted to hope that, when Indian music has learnt to widen the scope and to be content to appeal to the sense of the beautiful alone, a composer may arise until by process of evolution we obtain creations fit to rank with those of the West. Whether the delicate gradations of Indian tone and the nature of Indian musical instruments will ever befitted for the production of the true symphonic music I cannot say, but so long as that is denied to her, so long will Indian music be shut out from the highest form of musical expression.

THE TOPE OF SANCHI.

J. D. W. writes in the *Indian Magazine* and *Review* :

What the great Tope of Sanchi was built to commemorate nobody now can tell. It is the largest of all in a country of many topes, for Bhilsa, which is situated in the territory of Bhopal, can count more than a hundred and forty of them. No relics are contained in it, although in the smaller tope, half-way down the hill on which it stands, have been found the ashes of Sariputta and Moggalyana, two of the friends and disciples of the Budha. It was built in the time of Asoka, and may have had some special association with him, for it is known that his wife came from a neighbouring village. There is also a tradition that Sanchi was an important halting-place in the communication which began early in Buddhist history between North India and Ceylon. One of the carvings at Sanchi shows the ships that took Mahinda and Sanghamitta, the son and daughter of Asoka, to Ceylon as Buddhist missionaries, bearing as their sym-

bol a branch of the Bo-tree from Buddh-Gaya. But it is most probable that this great tope belongs to yet another class of topes; that it was built neither to enshrine relics nor to commemorate some holy happening, but in honour of the supreme invisible Adi-Buddha, and that statues of the four earthly Buddhas were placed in its gateways :—one of them still remains.

It is set on a beautiful hill in the midst of wild and solitary country. Over the hill grows a thicket of trees, among them the custard-apple, and that tree of which the hard shining scarlet seeds are used in India by jewellers as weights for weighing precious stones, and in the West Indies as "jumby-beads" or amulets to keep of evil spirits. Lower down the hill are groves of banyan and mango trees, and tangles of prickly babool, and round its base lie fields of cotton and gram. Beyond are the rolling blue plains where leopards range, and whence at night could hear the howl of the jackals. But it is a remote and beautiful place; and far from the world as it is, and hollowed by ancient religious associations, it would be a fit place still for the life of meditation and the healing of the soul.

The tope itself consists of a great hemisphere, faced with stone, and set on a plinth or drum, which can be ascended by a stairway. On the top of the plinth is a path round the dome, possibly used as a processional way. Another processional path leads round the foot of the plinth, between that and the great stone rail that encircles the building—if building it can be called. This is about 10 feet high, and is made of flattened cylinders of stone; the upright bars monolithic, the horizantal bars morticed into these in such a manner as to suggest the idea given by all early Buddhist stonework of having been recently derived from architecture of wood. This rail is a memorial of the piety of many persons: the stones were the offerings of different Buddhists whose names can still be read carved upon them. It is quite plain, with none of the ornament of lotus and elephant and figure subjects one finds upon the rail of Buddh-Gaya, or on the tope lower down the hill.

But the great wonder of the place is the four carved gateways with the elaborate wealth of sculpture and ornament. In their shape, with the three cross-bars of the top extending beyond the gate-posts, they recall the torans of the temples of China and Japan. All the four gateways were erected in the first century of the Christian era, and are carved with a kind of joyous exuberance and freedom which latter Indian art partly lost. And after one has rejoiced in the gay beauty of the delightful dancing figures and gallent horsemen, the lively and humorous elephants, the staid Byzantine lions, the grotesque dwarfs, and the fine conventionalised ornament of chakra and trisul and lotus, one realises that this is like some Gothic cathedral, like Chartres, or like the mosaics of the porch of San, marcoat Venice, not only a beautiful work of art, but a whole setting forth of a mythology and a creed. We can read the life of the Buddha, from the vision of the white elephant by Maya his mother, which marked his miraculous conception his birth under the tree in the Lumbini gardens, the contests in arms by which he won his bride Yasodhara, his life of ease in his palace with many—it seems an inordinate proportion—drinking and love-making scenes. Then we see him riding out from his palace, and his meeting with the sick man, the

old man, and the dead man, the sight of whom awakened him to seek for the secret of the sorrow of the world. On one of the pillars of the gateway we see how he finally left his kingdom, and how his horse Chanda returned to the palace without him, and how the people received it with sorrow and with defence.

In some of the Buddhist books we are told how the Buddha meditated under four holy trees—the Bodhi tree, the Nigrodho tree, the Macholindo tree, and the Rajayatana tree; and these trees are frequently represented on all the four gateways. After attaining Buddha-hood, he is indicated by symbols, but never represented in person, and was not so represented until the days of the Greek influence in Gandhara. We see his emblems—the chakra or wheel of the law, and the trisul; and on one of the pillars are the very decorative imprints of his sacred feet. We see the trees being adored and garlanded by elephants and men and celestials. We see railed topes, and processions coming from east and west to do them homage. There is the wheel on an altar, receiving the worship of men and herds of deer. There is an interesting scene of worship before a cave-temple; one may see the horse-shoe shaped window and the horse-shoe and rail ornament as one may find them at Ellora or Ajanta to-day; and in front of the temple men and women stand with uplifted hands as at a ceremonial. Then there are great crowded panels whose story we could not read—scenes of war and sieges of cities where both sides fought with bows and arrows. In one of these scenes the central figure is an elephant carrying a relic-box and accompanied by a king in his chariot. There are forest scenes also, with hermits in their asrams, building huts, planting seeds, and making fires. Here and there are representations of the Naga rajahs, who were patrons of Buddhism; they wear very fine knotted and jewelled turbans.

We are taken further back even than Gautama Buddha's life by one of the Jataka stories on the north gateway. It has a special association with Sanchi, as Prince Wessentara or Sudana, who was supposed in a succeeding life to have been the Buddha, ruled over Bhilsa. He was a prince of such generosity that, like Brother Juniper, the follower of St. Francis of Assisi, who gave away to a begger the bells from the altar, he was never known to refuse a request. He gave away the sacred white elephant, and his people sent him into banishment with his wife and children; but he did not travel far in his chariot before he gave away the horses to a Brahman. This is one of the scenes illustrated at Sanchi. He and his family went to the forest, where they lived in caves. One day, when his wife was absent, he gave the children to a Brahman who asked for them. His wife felt a foreboding of evil, and was hastening home, when Indra, in the shape of a lion, prevented her. The hill of the Illustratious Giver was called by Sung-yun, the Chinese pilgrim, Shen-chi, and hence probably the name Sanchi.

Sanchi has many tales to tell, if the fragments could but be pieced together into a history. On the top of the hill is the circular apse of the only known structural chaitya, or Buddhist assembly hall. There are many in the cave-temples, but this is the only built one, and very little of it remains. Then there is a little square flat-roofed temple of the Gupta period, and the ruins of a vihara or monastery. Strewn around are many

beautiful fragments—fine torsos of Bhodi-sattavas of Hindu gods, with elaborate jewels and garlands, Amalaka ornaments from the tops of vanished temples, Buddha-heads, capitals of broken pillars—all waiting still for their interpreter.

A NATIONAL THEATRE FOR ENGLAND.

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, speaking at Blackheath on "The Case for a National Theatre," said that a great deal of the difficulty ot inducing the English public to believe that they ought to establish a national theatre came from their habit of regarding the theatre as being one of those things that might safely be left to private enterprise. We had a National Gallery and a Hampton Court, and in most towns there was a place in which masterpieces of art were exhibited permanently for the pleasure and education of the citizens. It was recognised that that could not be done by private enterprise. There were two great departments of life. There were those supplies which they could leave to commercial enterprise, but there were other things, including some of the first and highest needs of the community, which must be organised as a matter of national conscience. The theatre was one of those high concerns which ought not to be left entirely to private speculation.

The difficulty of getting a high class book published was nothing to the difficulty of getting a high class play put on the stage. A book need only be readable enough to appeal to 15,000 of the most cultivated people in London or in the whole population. Before they got a play to succeed at all they had to get something which would appeal to 100,000 people, and they had got to run down the quality to an enormous extent to get that. When Mr. Granville Barker and he were at the Court Theatre they got not so much an audience as a congregation. The same people came again and again, in fact, they got into the habit of coming. English people did not go to the theatre The people who went to the theatre in London were not English people. He did not mean to say that English people did not occasionally go as a sort of amusement, but they had no habit of going.

The Cabinet went to the Court Theatre. He went three times to the Court Theatre, and the first person he met each time was Mr. Asquith. Probably Mr. Balfour, with Sir Oliver Lodge, was also there round the corner. The genuine English people had found that the theatre bored them. When he first said that what the English people wanted in the theatre was plenty of politics, religion and long speeches he was told he was mad.

How were they to establish a real, genuine, national theatre. He contended that the popular theatre of to-day was not a national theatre. The genuine people of England were not to be found in that theatre. The theatre had an enormous power of forming the minds and hearts of the people. They wanted a national theatre to get the best plays produced otherwise the best men would not write for the stage. He had written to the best literary men whe were writing novels, and begged them to come to the rescue of the theatre, and they declined to do it. The only solution was to establish and endow out of public money a great national theatre and to maintain it entirely independent of competitive commercial considerations. It was an

important fact that people were going less and less to church and more and more to the theatre. It was vain to remonstrate and say :—" Go back to the church." The theatre like the Church, was a place where two or three were gathered together, and it was as sacred a place as any other. If they could not get the people to learn the noblest lessons of life in Church they must give them a theatre in which they could learn those lessons.

POETIC DRAMA ON THE STAGE.

A recent performance of Swinburne's *Atalanta In Caledon* has formed the occasion for some interesting comment on the above subject by the *London Times* :

Surely, if *Atalanta* is to be acted at all the actors must never for a moment forget that they are speaking a language further removed from reality than the language of any play of Shakespeare's, a language which compensates for its lack of illusion by its beauty. They must therefore be careful never at any moment to sacrifice this beauty to any attempted realism. They must not speak a single verse as if it were prose. If they do that, the momentum of the piece is fatally impaired ; and it is far better to rise monotony than to do that. The problem of the choruses is the problem of the whole play. They evidently cannot be said as if they were part of a conversation in ordinary life. They must be treated as pure poetry, and they have the same relation to the blank verse that aria in an opera has to recitative. That is to say, there must be no violent contrast between them ; and the blank verse must pass into the lyrical as recitative passes into aria.

Our actors, unfortunately, have few opportunities of delivering poetry, and they seldom have enough technical training in the very difficult art of saying it audibly and at the same time preserving its rhythmical beauty. Their art is a prose art, and when they have to do with poetry they are apt to maltreat it with all the tricks of the prose drama. *Atalanta* under such treatment becomes meaningless. It requires a technique of its own ; and since it is the only modern play of its kind which has enough life in it to tempt actors to perform it, such a technique is not likely to be developed. But if we are ever to have a poetical drama again, a poetic technique must be developed ; and it will certainly be a technique utterly different from that which is needed for the modern prose drama. Poets, when they say poetry, are apt to chant it rather monotonously, with great insistence on the rhythm and when it is rhymed, upon the rhymes. Indeed, Morris used to ask why any one supposed poets took the trouble to rhyme if their rhymes were not to be heard. Poets, in fact, insist upon the material beauty of verse; and that material beauty, since it is expressive, ought to be insisted upon in the poetic drama. Also, the further a poetic drama is removed from reality the more must the material beauty of the verse be insisted upon by way of compensation. The poetic drama, if it has any right to exist at all, exists like music, by right of its expressive power, not of its illusion. It may be said, of course, that *Atalanta* is not to be judged as drama at all ; that it is read and enjoyed for its choruses and for isolated speeches ; that, unlike *King Lear or Othello*, it has no cumulative power, since no

reader is interested in what happens in it but only in the wonderful episodes for which the story is a mere pretext. But that we believe to be untrue. The chorus "Before the beginning of years" would not be so moving in an anthology as it is when read just after Althæa's great speech about Meleager's birth. The chorus "O that I now, I too were" is one of the most beautiful poems in the language; but its beauty is enormously heightened by its place in the drama just before the evil tidings of the messenger. Consider, for instance, the manner in which it breaks off in the midst of the prayer to Artemis—

> We beseech thee by thy light,
> By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
> And the kingdom of the night,
> Be thou favourable and fair;
> By thine arrows and thy might
> And Orion overthrown;
> By the maiden thy delight,
> By the indissoluble zone
> And the sacred hair.

That is an incomparably beautiful metrical effect by itself; but a thousand times more beautiful when it is followed by the contrast of the messenger's words that follow. And the lyrical dialogue between the dying Meleager and Atalanta and the the Chorus has an extraordinary cumulative and dramatic power, without which it would be too long drawn in its beauty. When Atalanta bends over Meleager and cries—

> I would that with feet.
> Unsandalled, unshod.
> Overbold overfleet,
> I had swum not nor trod.

From Arcadia to Calydon northward, a blast of the envy of God, she is not merely talking poetry at large, but dramatic poetry proper to the moment and to her character; and the music of the verse is as expressive of the drama as any tune of Mozart's. Again, Meleager, Atalanta, and Althæa have all distinct characters. We feel that it is natural that Meleager should love Atalanta and that Althæa should sacrifice her son to her revenge. Swinburne has never drawn such a character as her in any other play of his; and indeed, he has never made another play that is so moving to read, and moving, not merely for its episodes, but for its story and for the contrast between the glory of its beginning and the darkness of its end.

But since it is moving to read, it would surely be moving if it were rightly acted, and it could only be rightly acted if the beauty of the verse were incessantly displayed as the beauty of music is displayed in an opera. To do this it would be necessarily for every actor to forget all the old tricks with which actors are wont to express emotion. They must not take three steps forward and then halt and throw up their arms. They must not suddenly press their hands to their hearts, or cross them no their breasts and raise their eyes to

heaven. They must not even lift the voices unless the verse gives them good reason for doing so. They must be content first and foremost to say the verse as poetry with as little gesture or facial expression as possible. When once they understand its poetic beauty and the expressive power of its rhythm they will begin to act it naturally and without irrelevance or exaggeration; and they will communicate their own sense of its beauty to the audience, as a fine interpreter communicates his sense of the beauty of music.

As for the Chorus, there is no need that they should insist upon their dramatic rights or attempt any pedantic imitation of their unknown Greek originals. Their main duty, even more than any one else's, is to say or sing the poetry as poetry, so that every word of it can be clearly heard; and if they cannot sing it audibly or find expressive music to accompany it, they should chant it clearly and quietly. Such chanting might be very impressive. But at present we do not at all know how to combine dancing with the delivery of poetry; and attempts to do so are merely distracting. We hope that some day a performance of *Atalanta* will be given in which it will be treated as poetry first and last. Then, we believe, it will be found that its poetic beauty is the key to its dramatic power, and that, whether it is Greek or not, it is both poetry and drama.

DRAMATIC NEWS.

THE SUGUNA VILASA SABHA.

Arrangements are being made to give a series of four performances in Colombo during the first half of June. A large party of members proceed to Ceylon about the beginning of June.

LECTURES.

The following are among the lectures arranged by the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* for the next term:

(*i*) TOLSTOY ON ART, by Profesor K. B. Ramanathan M.A., B.L., L.T.

(*ii*) ACTING AS A FINE ART, by Mr. V. V. Srinivasan, B.A., B.L.

(*iii*) PROSE AND POETRY in Dramatic Literature, by Mr. P. Seshadri, M.A.

A humorous instance (of stage fright) happened to myself. I was playing "Bevarley" in *The Gamester.* Near to the close of the play the ruined man, in a sad soliloquy, in which he ought to hold the house, takes poison, and put in end to his miserable life. All went well, and the audience quiet as mice. I said my words and then lifting a small phial, let the contents rickle down my throat. Unfortunately I had not rehearsed with a bottle. What on earth was I to do with it? flashed across my mind. It is wonderful how many ideas can crowd into a second of time. Should I put it in my pocket if so which pocket? should I retain in my hand, clutching it; in another moment the audience would be in a fit of laughter Agony! Happily the man who played ' Stukeley" the villian of the peace, who was at the wings, saw my dilemma, and shouted in a stage whisper "Throw it down, you damn fool; throw it down!" And down it went with a crash and the situation was saved! my poor family rushed in and I fell dead in the arms of some one whose duty it was to catch me. This *contretemps* really happened through bad rehearsal.